

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 05419 202207Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 557
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY BRAZILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5419

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PE
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON THE ELECTIONS

1. WE WILL BE CABLING TOMORROW A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF
THE ELECTION RESULTS AND WHAT THEY MAY PORTEND. IN THE
MEANTIME I MIGHT OFFER THESE BRIEF COMMENTS.

2. THE ELECTION ITSELF HAS TO BE COUNTED A CONSIDERABLE
SUCCESS. THE TURNOUT WAS HEAVY, PROBABLY CLOSE TO 85 PERCENT
OF THE ELIGIBLE VOTERS. VOTING IS COMPULSORY IN
PERU AND AN UNSTAMPED ELECTORAL LIBRETA CAN CAUSE VARIOUS
PROBLEMS FOR AN ORDINARY CITIZEN DEALING WITH THE GOVERN-
MENT BUREAUCRACY. BUT VOTING IS COMPULSORY IN COLOMBIA
TOO, FOR EXAMPLE. AND THERE WAS NO REAL EXPECTATION HERE
THAT THE GOP WOULD TRY TO PUNISH THE NO-SHOWS IN ANY SERIOUS
FASHION. ALSO, THERE WERE NUMEROUS INHIBITIONS: A
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PAGE 02 LIMA 05419 202207Z

CUBERSOME REGISTRATION PROCESS; THE PROBLEM OF RESIDENCE
FOR VOTING PURPOSES IN A COUNTRY WHERE THERE HAS BEEN SO
MUCH SHIFTING OF POPULATION IN RECENT YEARS; GENERAL CON-
FUSION AS TO WHAT THE ELECTION WAS ABOUT AND THE FAILURE
OF THE PARTIES TO AROUSE MUCH EXCITEMENT; THE
STATE OF EMERGENCY, RESTRICTED ACCESS TO THE MEDIA FOR
POLITICAL PURPOSES, THE OFF AND ON NATURE OF THE ELECTION AND SO

MANY OTHER NEGATIVE FACTORS. AGAINST ALL THIS THE PERUVIANS TURNED OUT AND VOTED.

3. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THE VOTER THROUGH OUT THE COUNTRY MADE HIS CHOICE FREELY, WITHOUT PRESSURE OR INTERFERENCE. (THE STARTLING SUCCESS OF THE ULTRA-LEFT FOCEP, A PARTY THE GOP REGARDS AS ANATHEMA, IS SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR THAT CONCLUSION.) SO FAR THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANYTHING BUT AN HONEST COUNT. ALTHOUGH THE LEFT CONTINUES TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE DEPORTATIONS AND OTHER PRE-ELECTORAL GOVERNMENT MEASURES, NO PARTY HAS YET TRIED TO IMPUGN THE PROCESS ITSELF. BUT THE REAL TEST IS STILL TO COME. IF THE GOP DOES IN FACT ALLOW HUGO BLANCO, GENARO LEDESMA AND THE LIKE TO TAKE THEIR SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY, THE DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS OF THIS ELECTION WILL BE UNCHALLENGEABLE.

4. WHAT IT SEEMS TO ME THE VOTERS WERE SAYING LAST SUNDAY WAS THAT IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE. LUIS BEDOYA REYES COMMENTED YESTERDAY THAT IT WAS VELASCO'S REVOLUTION THAT TOOK THE WORST BEATING. THE PARTY THAT STOOD FOR THAT REVOLUTION, THE PSR, DID POORLY; SO DID THOSE PARTIES THAT COLLABOTATED WITH IT -- THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, THE COMMUNIST AND ARS. PCP SECRETARY GENERAL JORGE DEL PRADO ATTRIBUTED THE RESULTS TO A "GROWING AND VERY STRONG ANTI-MILITARIST SENTIMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LIMA 05419 202207Z

CAPITLIZED UPON BY THE EXTREMISTS OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT" (REFERRING TO BEDOYA'S PCP AND FOCEP). THE REACTION AGAINST A DECADE OF MILITARY RULE -- AND AGAINST ECONOMIC CRISIS AND STAGNATION -- SEEMS TO ME OBVIOUS.

5. MUCH DEPENDS NOW ON WHETHER THE POLITICANS OF THE CENTER-LEFT AND RIGHT -- HAYA, BEDOYA AND BELAUNDE IN PARTICULAR -- CAN COMPOSE THEIR ANCIENT QUARRELS, SUBORDINATE THEIR UNQUENCHABLE AMBITIONS AND GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTION TO THIS DESIRE FOR CHANGE. IN A SENSE THE BURDEN OF PROOF HAS NOW SHIFTED TO THEM FROM MORALES BERMUDEZ AND HIS COLLEAGUES. SHLAUDEMAM

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